



By Neil Moody, CEO, CHBA BC

# Shaping the future of residential construction

Two recent announcements by the Government of B.C. are set to shape the future direction of the residential construction industry in British Columbia.

On March 4, 2015, the Government of B.C. announced that mandatory education requirements would now be a prerequisite for builders applying for, and renewing licensing through the Homeowner Protection Office (HPO) to construct homes under Part 9 of the B.C. Building Code. This comes after years of industry consultation and development of the new regulation. The changes are based on recommendations in a report provided by a working group comprised of industry professionals in the residential construction industry.

The new enhanced licensing system establishes new qualifications requirements for general contractors. When renewing or obtaining a new license, applicants will now be required to demonstrate proficiency in the following categories:

- Building Code
- Construction management and supervision
- Construction technology
- Customer service and home warranty insurance
- Financial planning and management
- Legal issues
- Business planning and management

The seven core training courses offered by Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC (CHBA BC) have been recognized as meeting these new mandatory education requirements and the Association is an approved training provider under the new regulation.

"As a home builder, I strongly support this progressive action by the BC government," said Simon Howse, President of CHBA BC. It promotes professionalism in our industry, and provides assurance to consumers that their new homes will be well built. Our industry also appreciates that the new requirements will be phased in over a period of six, 12 and 16 months, to allow our members time to ensure they meet the new standard."

CHBA BC has been advocating

for minimum education as a requirement for builder licensing for the past decade. One of our guiding principles as an association is the importance of raising the level of professionalism within the residential construction industry. The government's action on this long-standing issue helps to ensure this will happen, and be reflected in the quality of homes that are built throughout the province, with the aim of increasing satisfaction and trust among home buyers.

### What does Formal Learning mean?

Formal learning means attendance in structured courses and training sessions; Two points are earned for every hour of formal learning.

For example, an active builder can meet their CPD requirements during the license term (one year) by completing 10 hours of formal learning.

### What does active practise mean?

Active practise means being actively engaged in the construction management of new homes during the year.

To address the issue of circumventing homeowner insurance, Owner Builders (those authorized by the Homeowner Protection Office to build a new home for their personal use) will now have to pass an examination on home building basics. The new requirement will help owner builders expand upon their knowledge of home building and help alleviate the strain placed on building officials, whom are often placed in a situation of teaching applicants the necessary building processes. Builders will have to be aware that they cannot be hired as the general contractor to circumvent

### How many hours of learning will I have to take to meet CPD requirements?

Learning Method	Hours of learning that must be completed to claim 1 point	Maximum claimable points for each learning method
Active practise	20	20
Formal learning	0.5	40
Informal learning	1	20

Licenses must complete a minimum of 40 points of continuing professional development (CPD) during the license term (one year)

the requirement of home warranty protection.

The HPO and CHBA BC are currently on a province-wide tour to 16 communities to provide free information sessions to builders. More than 1,300 builders have registered for the seminars to date. As CHBA BC CEO, I have traveled with HPO. The reception has been very positive and in speaking with builders, they have expressed support of the new education requirements and are providing some great feedback to HPO.

### New B.C. Building Act

The provincial government gave Royal Assent to the new Building Act on March 25. This significant milestone is welcomed by the Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC, which was a member of, and participated in, the Modernization Advisory Group that contributed extensively to the changes that will update and streamline the province's building regulatory system.

Differing building requirements between jurisdictions can slow development and add costs. With a more streamlined and modern building regulatory system, costs will be reduced and efficiency, productivity and innovation in the construction sector will improve.

As part of the Modernization Advisory Group, along with CHBA National Executive Committee Member, Nathan Stone, the new Act, we believe, will establish more consistent building requirements throughout B.C., with the exception of the City of Vancouver. (For those outside of B.C.: The City of Vancouver Building By-law is unique in B.C. The Vancouver Charter enables the City to adopt the City of Vancouver Building By-law that regulates the design and construction requirements of buildings as well as administrative provisions for permitting, inspection, and enforcement of these requirements.)

It is the result of years of industry advocacy and will ensure building requirements are the same across the province by establishing the provincial government as the sole authority to create these standards.